General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 January 2003

Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 102

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/57/549)*]

57/177. Situation of older women in society

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the obligations of all States to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as stated in the Charter of the United Nations, and guided by the purposes and principles of human rights instruments,

Recalling its resolution 44/76 of 8 December 1989 on elderly women and its resolution 56/126 of 19 December 2001 on the situation of older women in society, Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/23 of 4 May 1982 on elderly women and the World Assembly on Ageing and Council resolutions 1986/26 of 23 May 1986 and 1989/38 of 24 May 1989 on elderly women, and Commission on the Status of Women resolution 36/4 of 20 March 1992 on the integration of elderly women into development,[1]

Recalling also the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"[2] and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[3] in particular their provisions regarding older women,

Reaffirming that the Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,[4] provide a broad spectrum of social, political and economic recommendations to improve the conditions of older women,

Recognizing that older women outnumber older men, increasingly so with increasing age, and that the situation of older women everywhere must be a priority for policy action,

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[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1992, Supplement No. 4* (E/1992/24), chap. I, sect. C.

[2] Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

[3] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[4] See *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8–12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4).

Aware that in order to ensure full equality between women and men it is essential to recognize the differential impact of ageing on women and men and to integrate a gender perspective into all policies, programmes and legislation,

Aware also that women constitute the majority of older populations in all regions of the world and represent an important human resource whose contribution to society has not been fully recognized,

Recognizing the increasing role of older women in taking the responsibility of providing care and assistance to those infected and affected by the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in various regions of the world, particularly in developing countries,

Affirming the dual challenges of ageing and disability, and affirming also that older persons have specific health needs and that, owing to the increase in life expectancy and the growing number of older women, their health concerns require particular attention and further research,

Aware that few statistics are available on the situation of older women, and recognizing the importance of data, including data disaggregated by age and sex, as an essential element of planning and policy evaluations,

Recognizing that women of all ages, in particular older women, continue to suffer from discrimination and lack of opportunities, including educational opportunities,

Emphasizing that Governments bear the primary responsibility for creating an enabling environment for the economic and social development of their citizens, and noting with appreciation the valuable contributions of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in calling attention to the specific needs of older women,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, held at Madrid from 8 to 12 April 2002,[4] and the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing,[5] and calls for efforts to implement the global action plan aimed at meeting the challenges of the world's ageing population, in particular with regard to older women;

2. *Stresses* the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective, while continuing to take into account the needs of older women, in policy and planning processes at all levels;

3. *Also stresses* the need to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender and age and ensure equal rights and their full enjoyment for women of all ages;

4. *Urges* Governments and regional and international organizations, including the United Nations system in cooperation with civil society, including non-governmental organizations, where appropriate, to promote programmes for healthy active ageing that stress the independence, equality, participation and security of older women and to undertake gender-specific research and programmes to address their needs;

5. *Emphasizes* the need for Governments and regional and international organizations, including the United Nations system and the international financial

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institutions, to develop and improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of data disaggregated by age and sex;

6. *Welcomes* the adoption in April 2002 by the Valencia Forum of research and academic professionals of the Research Agenda on Ageing for the Twenty-First Century, to support the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002;[4]

7. *Urges* Governments to take measures to enable all older women to be actively engaged in all aspects of life by assuming a variety of roles in communities, public life and decision-making, and to develop and implement policies and programmes in cooperation with civil society, including non-governmental organizations, where appropriate, to ensure that older women can achieve their full enjoyment of human rights and quality of life, with a view to contributing to the realization of a society for all ages;

8. *Calls upon* Governments and the United Nations system to ensure that the needs, perspectives and experiences of older women are reflected in all development policies and programmes;

9. *Invites* Governments, the United Nations system and international organizations to consider, in their development planning, the increasing responsibilities of older women in providing care and assistance for those affected by HIV/AIDS;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

77th plenary meeting
18 December 2002

United Nations A/RES/57/178

General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 January 2003

Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 102

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/57/549)*]

57/178. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 56/229 of 24 December 2001 and its previous resolutions on the elimination of discrimination against women,

Bearing in mind that one of the purposes of the United Nations, as stated in Articles 1 and 55 of the Charter, is to promote universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of any kind, including distinction as to sex,

Affirming that women and men should participate equally in social, economic and political development, should contribute equally to such development and should share equally in improved conditions of life,

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[1] in which the Conference reaffirmed that the human rights of women and the girl child were an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights,

Acknowledging the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to the promotion and protection of the human rights of women, which includes the integration of the human rights of women into the mainstream of United Nations activities system-wide,

Reaffirming the commitments made in the political declaration[2] and the outcome document[3] of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", in particular paragraphs 68 (*c*) and (*d*) concerning the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[4] and the Optional Protocol thereto,[5]

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[1] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[2] Resolution S-23/2, annex.

[3] Resolution S-23/3, annex.

[4] Resolution 34/180, annex.

[5] Resolution 54/4, annex.

Recalling that, in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[6] heads of State and Government resolved to implement the Convention,

Recognizing that the equal enjoyment by women of all human rights will promote the realization of the rights of the child, bearing in mind the special needs of girls, and acknowledging the mutual reinforcement of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child[7] and the Optional Protocols thereto,[8]

Welcoming the progress made in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, but expressing concern about the remaining challenges,

Welcoming also the growing number of States parties to the Convention, which now stands at one hundred and seventy,

Welcoming further the entry into force on 22 December 2000 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

Bearing in mind the recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women that national reports should contain information on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action,[9] in accordance with paragraph 323 of the Platform,

Having considered the report of the Committee on its twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh sessions,[10]

Expressing concern at the great number of reports that are overdue and that continue to be overdue, in particular initial reports, which constitutes an obstacle to the full implementation of the Convention,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General[11] on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;[4]

2. *Expresses disappointment* that universal ratification of the Convention was not achieved by 2000, and urges all States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so;

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of full compliance by States parties with their obligations under the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto;[5]

4. *Welcomes* the rapidly growing number of States parties to the Optional Protocol, which now stands at forty-nine, and urges other States parties to the Convention to consider signing and ratifying or acceding to the Optional Protocol;

5. *Also welcomes* the holding and successful outcome of the first informal meeting of States parties, held in New York on 17 June 2002;

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[6] See resolution 55/2.

[7] Resolution 44/25, annex.

[8] Resolution 54/263, annexes I and II.

[9] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[10] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/57/38).

[11] A/57/406 and Corr.1.

6. *Further welcomes* the fact that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has adopted the rules governing its work under the Optional Protocol as part of its revised rules of procedure;[12]

7. *Notes* that some States parties have modified their reservations, expresses satisfaction that some reservations have been withdrawn, and urges States parties to limit the extent of any reservations that they lodge to the Convention, to formulate any such reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible, to ensure that no reservations are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention, to review their reservations regularly with a view to withdrawing them and to withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention;

8. *Welcomes* the adoption by the Committee of revised reporting guidelines,[13] in particular on the length of reports of States parties and the streamlining of their structure and content;

9. *Recalls* the great number of overdue reports, in particular initial reports, and urges States parties to the Convention to make every possible effort to submit their reports on the implementation of the Convention in a timely manner in accordance with article 18 thereof;

10. *Encourages* the Secretariat to extend further technical assistance to States parties, upon their request, in the preparation of reports, in particular initial reports, and invites Governments to contribute to these efforts;

11. *Invites* States parties to make use of the technical assistance provided by the Secretariat to facilitate the preparation of reports, in particular initial reports;

12. *Expresses its satisfaction* that the Committee has addressed successfully the large number of reports that awaited consideration by the Committee during the extraordinary session held from 5 to 23 August 2002;

13. *Commends* the Committee on its contributions to the effective implementation of the Convention;

14. *Strongly urges* States parties to the Convention to take appropriate measures so that acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention by a two-thirds majority of States parties can be reached as soon as possible so that the amendment may enter into force;

15. *Expresses its appreciation* for the efforts made by the Committee to improve the efficiency of its working methods and for the holding, in Lund, Sweden, from 22 to 24 April 2002, of the seminar on the working methods of the Committee, and encourages the Committee to continue its efforts in this regard;

16. *Also expresses its appreciation* for the participation of the Committee in the first inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies on methods of work relating to the State reporting process, held in Geneva from 26 to 28 June 2002;

17. *Encourages* the Committee, within its mandate, to continue to contribute to the efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the treaty bodies;

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[12] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/56/38), annex I.

[13] Ibid., *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/57/38), annex.

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/4 of 6 October 1999, to provide the resources, including staff and facilities, necessary for the effective functioning of the Committee within its full mandate, taking into account in particular the entry into force of the Optional Protocol;

19. *Urges* Governments, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to disseminate the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto;

20. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their mandates, as well as Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and, in particular, women's organizations, as appropriate, to continue to assist States parties, upon their request, in implementing the Convention, and in this regard encourages States parties to pay attention to the concluding comments as well as the general recommendations of the Committee;

21. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system to continue to build women's knowledge and understanding of and capacity to utilize human rights instruments, in particular the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto;

22. *Welcomes* the submission by the specialized agencies, at the invitation of the Committee, of reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities and the contribution of non-governmental organizations to the work of the Committee, and encourages the specialized agencies to continue to submit reports;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the implementation of the present resolution.

77th plenary meeting
18 December 2002